

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What are the next steps now that ridership results are completed?

A: The ridership forecast is used to determine the site amenities for each station site, such as number of parking spaces and passenger accommodations at the station platform. The forecast is also used to determine the appropriate number of passenger rail cars for the service. IDOT will continue to coordinate with station communities, Union Pacific Railroad and Metra on development of designs for station improvements.

The ridership forecast is used for infrastructure planning purposes and is not used to study the financial feasibility of the corridor.

Q: Who is funding this project?

A: The project is funded by the State of Illinois through the Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan. Governor Pritzker allocated \$275 million for the design and construction of the new passenger rail program. Similar to other IDOT state-supported passenger rail services, future operation of the Chicago to Rockford service will be included in annual appropriations from the State's General Revenue Fund.

Q: What is the project schedule?

A: IDOT is working with project partners, including Union Pacific Railroad and Metra as the host railroads, to advance the required corridor infrastructure improvements for introducing the passenger rail service between Chicago and Rockford. IDOT is completing planning and engineering design efforts prior to construction and anticipates the start of service by the end of 2027.

Q: What does the re-establishment of this rail service bring to the communities and surrounding areas it serves?

A: The re-establishment of rail service between Chicago and Rockford has been long-awaited. This service will provide a safe and reliable transportation mode to communities across northern Illinois. Project benefits include but are not limited to economic growth, enhanced quality of life, improved air quality, and travel time and cost savings.